

10. THE COMMISSION TAKES OFFICIAL NOTE OF THE WORK OF THE EAST OF HUDSON RAIL FREIGHT OPERATIONS TASK FORCE CHAIRED BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JERROLD NADLER OF NEW YORK, AND MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THIS TASK FORCE. THE COMMISSION BELIEVES THAT THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE HAS POTENTIALLY VERY SIGNIFICANT RAMIFICATIONS FOR THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT IN THAT IT MAY DETERMINE THE DEGREE AND FASHION IN WHICH OUR STATE IS CONNECTED TO THE NATIONAL RAIL NETWORK AND IS AFFORDED FREIGHT ACCESS TO THIS NETWORK FOR MARKETS SOUTH AND WEST OF NEW YORK CITY. THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, ACTING THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OR THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, PARTICIPATE IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PURSUING CONNECTICUT'S INTERESTS IN SECURING MORE EFFECTIVE CROSS-HUDSON RAIL ACCESS.

New York / New Jersey Cross Harbor rail tunnel and improved rail carfloat operations:

Connecticut should actively support a cross harbor rail tunnel and improved rail carfloat operations, in order to reopen a through direct rail freight gateway along the Northeast Corridor through New York City. These actions would increase the efficiency and competitiveness of rail shipment to and from Metro New York and Connecticut, encouraging the movement of more goods by rail rather than by truck.

Overhead and side clearances on rail lines:

ConnDOT should update the 1986 report Recommended Minimum Overhead Clearances for Railroad Lines in Connecticut taking into account the possibility of a cross harbor rail tunnel and in light of the current types of rail freight equipment operated today by railroads in the eastern United States. At a minimum, the study should consider providing access for double stack or TOFC (trailer-on-flat car) and other types of higher profile equipment and should evaluate side clearances as well as overhead clearances, including clearances necessary for >well cars= carrying trailers or containers. Estimated costs of attaining the recommended clearances should be included in the report. Connecticut should seek federal funding assistance to increase overhead and side clearances as identified in the report.

Also, the provisions of C.G.S. Section 13b-251 allowing bridge reconstruction on existing abutments without reference to clearance standards should be repealed. The practice of seeking Legislative exemptions from the clearance standard set in C.G.S. 13b-211 for specific bridge projects should also be discouraged, and limited to lines where there is no significant intermodal freight potential. The current policy of undertaking bridge replacements and catenary wire installation at less than standard height constitutes a disinvestment in a singularly valuable transportation resource, and is in stark contrast to the clearance policy followed for highways as well as to the rail clearance policy followed in other states.

Relatedly, Connecticut should advocate to preserve and improve side clearances to accommodate as many categories of modern rail freight equipment as possible. Of particular and immediate concern are the track revisions proposed at New Rochelle, New York station to facilitate Amtrak and Metro-North service. We suggest that side clearances past the high level platforms there be preserved,

perhaps through the installation of a gauntlet track as was done at Old Saybrook station on Shore Line East.

Shared access of key rail lines:

Connecticut should work in concert with New York State in an effort to promote a policy of shared access by more than one railroad on key rail lines, especially the New Haven Line and the Maybrook Line (Beacon, NY-Danbury-Derby). Toward similar ends, Connecticut should actively encourage CSX and the Providence and Worcester (P&W) to reach a more cooperative, direct, and sensible agreement to handle P&W traffic between Connecticut and points in New York City and on Long Island, and via carfloat to New Jersey and beyond.

The public interest is not being served when CSX, citing insufficient levels of traffic, routes P&W cars to New York City via Springfield and Selkirk, NY, a route of over 300 miles versus 75 miles on the New Haven Line. If efforts to achieve a satisfactory agreement fail, Connecticut should consider a petition to the Surface Transportation Board to order that direct service be provided and that a competitive carrier be introduced to this corridor, as was advocated and done at the request of New York State on the Hudson Line between Albany and New York City, and in keeping with the objectives of the Congressional Intervention Petition.